



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

**North Carolina Board of Transportation
Environmental Planning and Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2006**

A meeting of the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee (EPPC) was held February 1, 2006 at 8:30 AM in the Board Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building. Board Member Nina Szlosberg chaired the meeting. Other Board of Transportation members that attended were:

Tom Betts	Nancy Dunn
Conrad Burrell	Douglas Gaylon
Mac Campbell	Arnold Lackey
Bob Collier	Cam McCrae
Marion Crowell	Andrew Perkins

State Secretaries that attended were:

Libba Evans, Department of Cultural Resources
Jim Fain, Department of Commerce
Bill Ross, Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Lyndo Tippet, Department of Transportation

Other attendees included:

Debbie Barbour	Steve DeWitt	Lacy Love	Len Sanderson
Loretta Barren	C. A. Gardner	Becky Luce-Clark	Andrew Sawyer
Chris Beacham	Terry Gibson	Bill Marley	Joel Setzer
Dempsey Benton	Carl Goode	Ehren Meister	Roy Shelton
Tad Boggs	Rickey Greene	Mike Mills	Jill Stark
David Brook	Rob Hanson	Graham Moore	John Sullivan
Doug Byrd	Mike Holder	Barry Moose	Jay Swain
Theresa Canales	Julie Hunkins	Jon Nana	Greg Thorpe
Clarence Coleman	Berry Jenkins	Randy Nana	Steve Varnedoe
Jeffrey Crow	Daniel Keel	Ken Pace	Marcus Wilner
Donna Dancausse	David King	Mike Pettyjohn	
Eddie Dancausse	Neil Lassiter	Bill Rosser	

Five handouts were distributed to the board members: the Meeting Agenda, the January 2006 meeting minutes, an Interagency Leadership Team Overview, the Interagency Leadership Team presentation slides, and the Interagency Leadership Team 2005 Strategic Plan.

Ms. Szlosberg called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and circulated the attendance sheet. Ms. Szlosberg accepted a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 2006 committee meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

Ms. Szlosberg began by emphasizing that the character and tenor of this administration has been one of working together. She then provided some background on the Interagency Leadership Team (ILT). About two years ago, the concept of a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team was developed with the goal of finding common ground and working together on initiatives that would mutually help these agencies further their missions. The ILT first met in July 2004 and began working on a strategic plan based on common goals. The ILT is founded on the principle that the State's transportation system should be planned hand-in-hand with economic development and the protection and enhancement of our State's cultural and natural resources.

Ms. Szlosberg stated that there are ten state and federal agencies that comprise the ILT:

1. NC Dept. of Transportation
2. NC Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources
3. NC Dept. of Commerce
4. NC Dept. of Cultural Resources
5. NC Wildlife Resources Commission
6. US Army Corps of Engineers (Ken Jolly, Seth McClendon)
7. Federal Highway Administration
8. US Fish and Wildlife Service
9. Environmental Protection Agency
10. National Marine Fisheries Service

She then recognized four Secretaries of state agencies who were in attendance:

- Secretary Libba Evans
- Secretary Jim Fain
- Secretary Bill Ross
- Secretary Lyndo Tippet

The members of the ILT, some of whom were at the meeting, are:

- Jeff Crow – NC Department of Cultural Resources
- David Brook – NC Department of Cultural Resources
- Doug Byrd – NC Department of Commerce
- Chris Beacham – NC Department of Commerce
- Dempsey Benton – NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Fred Harris – NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- John Sullivan – Federal Highway Administration
- Don Voelker – Federal Highway Administration
- Pete Benjamin – US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Ron Sechler – National Marine Fisheries Service
- Len Sanderson – NC Department of Transportation
- Debbie Barbour – NC Department of Transportation
- Ken Jolly – US Army Corps of Engineers

- Scott McLendon – US Army Corps of Engineers

This group came together because it believes that it is essential, and possible, to develop future transportation projects in a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders and preserves the scenic, historic, and natural environment as well as preserving community values while efficiently meeting the mobility, economic, and safety needs of our citizens.

Ms. Szlosberg then introduced Mr. Len Sanderson, State Highway Administrator, to talk about the background and mission of the ILT and its anticipated benefits and goals.

Mr. Sanderson commented that the agencies represented all have differing missions. The initial ILT discussions revolved around understanding each others' missions, then finding common ground. Then the ILT members established a mission and goals that are in the interests of the citizens of North Carolina. In developing this, the ILT members looked at issues from the perspective of the citizens of the state and attempted to find a balanced approach to providing mobility, protecting the environment, and supporting economic vitality and prosperity.

Three goals have been developed. The first goal emerged quickly, as there are many needs for a statewide Geographic Information System (GIS) which enables efficient development of quality products and projects. The second goal focuses on the connectivity between land use planning and transportation planning with an emphasis on proactively and strategically meshing the two. A well-developed and implemented strategy will help with our success as a state. The third goal focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation and environmental decision-making process during project development.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the ILT mission, goals and strategies, as summarized below.

ILT Mission: Develop an interagency leadership plan for North Carolina to balance successfully mobility, natural and cultural resource protection, community values, and economic vitality at the confluence of our missions.

ILT Goals:

1. Develop a shared, comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS)
2. Local land use and long-range transportation planning result in projects that meet mobility, economic, and environmental goals
3. Improve the Merger 01 Process

Goal 1 - GIS

1. Create new and update GIS layers, as needed
2. Develop a means to share database layers
3. Establish a mechanism for maintaining the data
4. Create a shared analytical platform

Goal 2 - Long-Range Planning

1. Enhance compatibility of land use, economic development, transportation planning, and environmental stewardship
2. Enhance land use planning to achieve shared economic development and environmental goals
3. Consider impacts, including secondary and cumulative impacts, starting at the CTP process

Goal 3 - Merger 01 Process

1. Maximize the full benefits of the Merger 01 Process
2. Continuously improve the management of the Merger 01 Process

Mr. Sanderson then introduced Mr. John Sullivan, Federal Highways Division Administrator. Mr. Sullivan showed a depiction of the Transportation Program Life Cycle and discussed how the three ILT goals relate to transportation decision-making and how they can help with better outcomes and more efficient decision making.

For Goal 1, a shared GIS database will help display the same information, and all of the information, in one place. This will be available to all of the different decision-makers. The state already has a good platform in NC OneMap (www.nconemap.net/), a statewide framework of geographic information available over the internet. Good information leads to good decisions.

The second goal is really land use and transportation plans working together to develop projects which meet the mobility needs, protect the environment and cultural resource, and are consistent with the community values of an area. The transportation planning process becomes bogged down because of secondary and indirect effects. A lot of time and money is spent researching indirect effects. The state does not mandate a land use planning process and, therefore, local groups may or may not have a land use plan. If local land use plans are put in place, we believe we can raise and solve issues earlier. However, understanding the interplay between land use with transportation planning, and making the two compatible, can reduce the time to develop projects. NCDOT is working with some of its partners to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) that includes a land use subprocess, and to integrate the long-range transportation planning and project development processes.

Improving the Merger 01 Process, which is Goal 3, will improve collaborative decision-making, leading to optimal decisions.

Mr. Sullivan concluded by pointing out that the three goals will help accomplish the objective of efficiently working together towards environmental stewardship, transportation mobility, and economic development.

Ms. Nina Szlosberg then welcomed Secretary Ross and Secretary Fain and invited their comments.

Secretary Fain stated that the ILT is a vital collaboration with outcomes of focused work and a reflex of teamwork. Secretary Fain added that we need to do more rather than less to support this effort.

Secretary Ross concurred with Secretary Fain, noting that leadership appreciates this effort and supports these goals.

Ms. Szlosberg then opened the floor for questions, initiating the discussion by requesting more information about Goal 2.

Mr. Sullivan replied that the real idea behind Goal 2 is that many of the issues, goals and objectives of our various programs are not really brought to the table until we get into the project development or Merger process. One example is the Monroe bypass and connector. A lot of development is occurring in that area. Issues include water quality and the status of threatened and endangered species. We are dealing these issues in the project development process. We now understand the potential effects of the project and have begun addressing them. Working through environmental issues at the long-range planning stage, in collaboration with local governments and their land use planning process, can result in projects that better fit into the communities and efficiencies during the project development process.

Also, the new highway reauthorization bill SAFETEA-LU has reinforced our ILT goals. It requires us to consult with the different agencies representing our cultural resource, natural land use, and economic development partners in the planning process. It also requires that we look at mitigation strategies in long-range planning. So the focus of Goal 2 is collaboration among these agencies -- identifying what information they have and what is important to them. Goal 2 aims to get this information from all the agencies and incorporating it into the long-range transportation planning process.

Mr. Chris Byrd commented on the importance of GIS as a shared resource. None of the agencies have enough money to do all of what they need to do. However, GIS can be used for all types of planning efforts. The cost to each agency is less and the value is much greater with this shared resource.

Mr. Sanderson replied that is the goal -- sharing the value of GIS. We have been working on the GIS initiative for a while. We are currently preparing a business case to present to the Secretaries and Governor to get funding. We estimate that we will need \$25 - 30 million over a 5-year period, plus \$3.5 million to maintain the system.

Mr. Dempsey Benton commented that several processes (metropolitan and rural planning processes, the NEPA process, transportation planning, etc.) need to be linked together better. GIS is a tool to help this happen. We need multiple processes to come together to get consensus before decisions are made. As much information as possible is needed when these decisions are being made.

Ms. Nancy Dunn asked if GIS is the linchpin and what is the timeline is. Mr. Sanderson replied that a team is working on the business case now and will present a detailed evaluation to the four Secretaries soon. Once we have their support, we will take the business case to the Governor's office and try to get it into the budget. Then there is a 5-year implementation, followed \$3.5 million maintenance and operation expenses annually.

Ms. Dunn asked if the long-range plan is structured to be in step with these activities. Mr. Sanderson responded that he thinks yes, but that does need to be examined.

Ms. Szlosberg commented that information is very powerful and needs to be meaningful and useful. During her recent Eisenhower Project trip to Germany, she observed that the German department of transportation measures and weighs every project against a standard. She asked if any performance measures been identified for our projects? Mr. Sanderson answered that we could evolve into that, but the current focus is on getting good data into the layers to help make good decisions.

Mr. Tom Betts added that he applauded all the work that has been done. But if you can't measure it you can't manage it. We need to be able to determine if projects are worth the effort and what the payoff is. He encouraged Mr. Sanderson to develop some system to evaluate this. Mr. Sanderson agreed that performance measures are critical, and we are building a business case, which includes implicit and explicit business measures.

Secretary Ross added that there is an equation which describes the benefits: an effective, cooperative working relationship + a good map = mobility, stewardship, and jobs. And it does it in a way that creates synergy instead of trade-offs. He stated there is huge value in this.

Mr. Sanderson asked Ms. Debbie Barbour to speak about the Merger 01 process. Ms. Barbour explained that the Merger 01 goal is focused on improvement of the Merger 01 process. The objective is to have more successful and efficient concurrence meetings where decisions can be made. The Merger 01 Conflict Dispute Resolution Process is now in place and can be used to keep the decision-making process moving forward in the event a Merger Team cannot reach agreement. Sometimes an impasse is reached in selecting an alternative. If the team can't agree then the issue is elevated to the Merger 01 Implementation Team. If there is still no agreement then the issue is elevated to the Deputy Secretary level. So there is a prescribed process for resolving disagreements. This will improve collaboration. We are also developing operating guidelines for who has responsibility for what and when. This is referred to as the Merger 01 Roles and Responsibilities document. Training on the entire Merger 01 process will start this summer.

Ms. Szlosberg concluded by asking the Board to think about how they can be helpful and supportive of this effort. Board members sit on the MPOs and RPOs. She asked that Board members consider what can be done to move these goals forward at the local level.

Seeing no further questions, Ms. Szlosberg adjourned the meeting at 9:30 A.M.

The next meeting for the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, 2006 at 8:30 A.M. in the Board of Transportation Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building.

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